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YOUR OFFICERS SALUTE YOU

Congress is still in session, so a final report on their action on various matters of interest to OPEDA members is not possible. Although very few bills affecting us have reached the stage of final enactment, Mr. Kneipp will make an interesting report on congressional proceedings thus far.

Our membership now stands at a high point—2,865. The biggest recent boost has come from Alabama, where 47 members have been added to our

rolls in the last few months. There seems to be a good possibility of a local chapter at Montgomery.

During the summer months many of the members of OPEDA have been busy with field work or field trips, and a few have been able to squeeze in a week or two of vacation. With this period behind us, OPEDA activities are being increased. Some of our standing committees are becoming active again, and the others will undoubtedly follow suit.

As indicated in the last letter, a study has been made of social activities of possible interest to the Washington membership. Announcement of the first event will be found elsewhere in this issue.

BENNET A. PORTER,
President.

ERWIN C. ELTING,
Vice President.

WALWORTH BROWN,
Secretary-Treasurer.

COMMENTS BY MEMBERS

● "MANAGEMENT?": OPEDA owes a debt of gratitude to Dr. P. L. Rusden, E&PQ, Cambridge, Mass., for an exceptional example of criticism that both stimulates and clarifies understanding. His viewpoint is expressed in the following excerpts from his letter.

Under "Code of Ethics" appearing in OPEDA, we have seven items. Under Item 1, "Honor, always," etc., there are four groups to whom basic obligations may be due, namely, the American people, the Government, Management, and Associates plus Co-workers. The first group is all inclusive, the second is representative of the first in our democracy, the last (to skip one for a moment) is clearly limited to colleagues, people with whom we work. Now to go back to my bone of contention, the third group, Management, is not recognizable as a part of the American people nor of the Government. . . . It is one thing to speak of management within a specific organization such as USDA, but it is quite another to translate USDA to the fields of commerce and industry by the unqualified use of the general term "management." . . .

. . . You are quite right when you say that the field of semantics is fraught with the perils of misunderstandings. It seems that contrary to

the usual situation we have in this Code of Ethics a misunderstanding brought about by the use of too few words on the part of a Government employee. Judging by press comments regarding "Government gobbledygook" alias "civil service verbosity" we have here the makings of a minor miracle. . . . I'll still plug for "Superior Officers" in lieu of "Management" to avoid confusion with a lot of corporation heads who are already in the category of "American people" along with Labor and Government. . . .

In its use in the Code of Ethics the term "Management" had no implication or intent to refer to other than the group of officers who collectively manage or direct the activities of, for example, the Department of Agriculture. In replying to Dr. Rusden's initial comment, the logical assumption was that in his case "Management" meant the Secretary, Under Secretary, and Assistant Secretary of Agriculture; the Chief, Associate Chief, and Assistant Chiefs of the Bureau of Entomology & Plant Quarantine; and the Regional or State Director for Massachusetts. However, the use of the term "Management" admittedly is subject to a broader construction, perhaps an embarrassing construction, and it may be that Dr. Rusden is well justified in his preference for the term "Superior Officers."

● PRINCIPLES AND GOALS: When Dr. H. G. Wilm of the Southern Forest Experiment Station, New Orleans, La., read Gifford Pinchot's "Breaking New Ground," and particularly the chapter "What Made the Service Click," and then in turn read the summary of the Hoover Commission's recommendations, he became convinced that in those two publications could be found the sound guiding principles for a professional organization such as OPEDA. Tentatively, and as a basis for wide consideration and discussion, those principles as he interprets them are as follows:

- (1) Select and reward the best men for any job, with increased emphasis on merit as compared to seniority.
- (2) Maintain high organizational standards by prompt care of ill-placed or inefficient personnel.
- (3) Delegate authority and responsibility to the utmost.
- (4) Cut down rigid regulations to a minimum, emphasizing management by principles rather than by rules and red tape.
- (5) Continue to reward unusual contributions, but with improved uniformity of criteria for these rewards.
- (6) Build up the conviction that all Department employees, regardless of rank, are servants of the people of the United States.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

● WASHINGTON AREA MEETINGS: In August the 830 OPEDA members in the Washington area were canvassed for their views as to the types of local meeting which would be most widely popular and best attended. Returns thus far slightly exceed 200 in number. For the various types of meeting the total votes cast were as follows:

Luncheon meetings.....	163
Jefferson Auditorium meetings, 5:45 to 6:45 p.m.....	112
Dinner meetings.....	143
Evening meetings.....	129
Evening social affairs.....	92

In first choice, the luncheon meetings led by a total of 106 as against 18 for the 5:45 to 6:45 meetings, 42

for the dinner meetings, 35 for evening meetings, and 3 for evening social affairs.

The only rooms in the South Building available for exclusive luncheon meetings are room 6962, with a capacity of about 64, and an adjoining room, 6970, with a capacity of about 24. These rooms, which are controlled by the Division of Training

of the Office of Personnel, are in heavy demand but OPEDA may be operating under a lucky star; at all events, the Division of Training has arranged to make room 6962 available to OPEDA during the noon hour of the third Tuesday of each month, beginning October 18. As in all other cases, the assignment is conditioned on the prerogative of any of the bureaus of the Department to bump the regular assignee if the room is needed for a bureau luncheon or other official type of meeting, but that is not understood to happen with any great frequency. Accordingly, plans have been made for an OPEDA luncheon at 12 noon, Tuesday, October 18.

A seating capacity of 64 as against a potential maximum demand considerably in excess of that number presents something of a problem. One thought was to allow each unit a quota of seats equal to the number of its representation on the council, or a quota of one seat to each unit not so represented. However, the Executive Committee concluded that it would be best to admit members in the order of their arrival until the capacity of the room had been reached.

As for dinners beginning at 6 p.m., Everett L. Lomasson, who is the head of the Welfare Association which operates the cafeterias and who pledges his full cooperation, is quite encouraging. The sixth wing cafeteria is not open to general use during the evening and thus makes it possible to afford special groups a reasonable degree of seclusion and privacy. They can enter and fill their trays in the fifth wing cafeteria, which is open to general use, and then pass into the sixth wing cafeteria. That entails passage through the kitchen, but Lomasson says folks do not object to that; in fact, they derive some amusement from it. Quite a few such dinners are now being held, but the schedule is far from full; if a minimum of 40 OPEDA members desired to hold such a dinner, satisfactory arrangements for it would be quite feasible. A considerable seating capacity would be available. Thus far no specific plans for such a dinner have been made, but if the first luncheon meeting is a success, then plans for a dinner would be in order.

● **NEW MAILING ADDRESS:** For handling its mail with the general public, members of Congress, and other agencies outside of the Department, OPEDA now has Post Office Box 381, Washington 4, D. C. However, so far as members within the Department are concerned, the long-prevailing departmental address may continue to be used.

● **NEW MEMBER OF OPEDA STAFF:** Last May Mrs. Agnes N. Chowe took over the secretarial duties of the OPEDA office, and her services during the intervening 4 months inspire the hope that a lifetime alliance will result. OPEDA's correspondence files have been revised; its relations are maintained with a high

degree of diplomacy and its correspondence is characterized by promptness and perfection. The 2 years Mrs. Chowe spent at the University of Wisconsin afford her a better-than-average understanding of the professional and scientific mind.

● **CLASSIFICATION GRADES:** An analysis of the current membership of OPEDA, as of September 26, 1949, gives an interesting picture of its distribution among the established classified grades, which proves to be as follows:

P&S		CAF	
Grades	Total	Grades	Total
1 -----	58	5 -----	6
2 -----	479	6 -----	2
3 -----	508	7 -----	67
4 -----	455	8 -----	8
5 -----	464	9 -----	104
6 -----	267	10 -----	4
7 -----	95	11 -----	71
8 -----	17	12 -----	60
9 -----	2	13 -----	51
		14 -----	19
Total	2,345	15 -----	2
		Total	394
SP		Others	29
Grades			
6 -----	79		
7 -----	12		
8 -----	6		
Total	97	Grand Total	2,865 members

A considerable proportion of those now in CAF grades initially occupied positions in P&S grades from which they moved into positions in the administrative classification, and the duties of the others are clearly professional in character. Thus, the civil-service classifications of the OPEDA membership clearly establish its professional character and justify its proud title.

The Act of August 28, 1935, decreed that each year there should be published an "Official Register of the United States," containing a full and complete list of all persons occupying administrative and supervisory positions in the Government, in connection with which salaries are paid from the Treasury of the United States. The latest available copy, that of 1948, has been scanned to determine the extent to which current members of OPEDA are featured in that Register, and the results are rather flattering.

For the Department of Agriculture the total number of names listed is 1,051. Of those, 327 are the names of members in good standing in OPEDA during the year 1949. That, roughly, is 30 percent of all of the persons listed for the Department. If the same proportion prevailed generally for all members of the USDA who are in the grades eligible for OPEDA membership, the organization would have about 7,500 members.

Among OPEDA's members are the chiefs of eight of the bureaus or equivalent major units of the Department. The associate or assistant chiefs of such units who currently are members of OPEDA aggregate 17 in number. In the next level of organization, the major divisions or branches of the bureaus, administrations, of-

fices, etc., the men or women in charge and their immediate assistants who belong to OPEDA are much greater in both numbers and proportions.

The "Official Register" makes it clearly evident that one who belongs to OPEDA is in highly respectable company.

● **BETTER PUBLICITY:** Over the years OPEDA's members from time to time have emphasized the desirability of more publicity for the merits and virtues of the professional employees of the Department. The Department's own informational agencies currently are achieving excellent results in this field, but in that province OPEDA's accomplishments thus far have been distinctly limited. One stimulating influence would be the free and frequent expression by individual members of their views regarding the types of publicity which should be accomplished by OPEDA, and the forms and channels which would have the widest popular appeal. No OPEDA member who has definite ideas on the subject should hesitate to speak out in meeting or in print.

● **BY-LAWS:** While the OPEDA Constitution is a quite admirable document which effectively establishes the basic principles to govern OPEDA's activities, it does not specifically prescribe all of the requirements and powers of current operation and management. To meet this condition the Council or the Executive Committee from time to time granted the necessary authorizations, but these often are subject to uncertainties as to the continuity or prescribed scope of the delegated authority. To facilitate the current conduct of business, these various authorizations, most of which hitherto have received separate Council approval, have now been assembled in a set of by-laws which have been approved by the Executive Committee and are now being printed. A copy of such by-laws will be forwarded to each member at the same time that ballots for election to the 1950 Council are distributed.

● **MULTIPLE TAXATION:** The May issue of the OPEDA newsletter suggested the desirability of individual membership confirmation of the fact that this subject is of sufficient importance to OPEDA members to warrant the organization in actively advocating early committee consideration of the pending bills and enactment of one or the other by Congress. Thus far the response has been very limited. The people who work at Beltsville, Maryland, but live in the District of Columbia, collectively have manifested a serious interest in the subject, but outside of that group the responses to date number less than half a dozen and are in the nature of personal viewpoints rather than citations and analyses of controlling facts.

Kneipp Letter No. 7

The trend of recent events faces OPEDA with the need to formulate a new set of objectives. Those which OPEDA has featured during the past several years no longer are so apropos as when initially expressed.

OPEDA advocated a pay structure commensurate with prevailing economic conditions. Additional to the pay increases of 1945, 1946, and 1948, the respective classification bills recently passed by the House and Senate contemplate moderate to substantial increases in compensation for most of the classified employees.

OPEDA has urged abolition of the \$10,000 salary ceiling. A faint step was taken last year (up to \$10,330). In passing the executive pay bill the House fixed the salaries of heads of certain bureaus at \$15,000; the Senate, at \$14,000. The Senate classification bill fixes a ceiling of \$12,500; the House bill, \$15,000. A raise in the salary ceiling of at least 25 percent seems wholly assured. Perhaps that is not enough, but it is a considerable step ahead.

OPEDA has long favored a more liberal retirement program. The Act of February 28, 1948, as it has since been amended in several respects, now affords civil-service employees a retirement system that, while not yet perfect, is in the main excellent and equitable.

Disability compensation was for years a discredit to the Nation. A maximum limit of \$116.67 was unconscionable. However, both Houses have now passed H. R. 3191, under which a person without dependents can be awarded as much as two-thirds of the pay he was receiving at the time of injury; a person with one or more dependents, three-fourths of such pay; up to a maximum of \$525 per month. More liberal provision is made for dependents, while the authorized allowance in cases where bodily members or faculties are lost or impaired is more commensurate with the injury sustained.

OPEDA has supported more adequate allowances of per diem and auto mileage rates. The maximum per diem has now been increased from \$6 to \$9; the maximum mileage allowance, from 5 cents to 7 cents per mile.

To what new goals should OPEDA now aspire? The interests and activities of the United States Department of Agriculture have become global in their ramifications. In the redemption of the Department's ever increasing responsibilities the professional employee has an ever increasing part. New principles and new standards, to inspire and guide professional activities, inevitably will be needed. As an organization of professional employees of USDA, OPEDA might well take the lead in defining and expressing the measures which will enhance the work of the Department and promote the best interests of the Nation and the world. Now is the time for the professional people of USDA to

translate their vision, experience, faith, judgment, and imagination into specific and actionable proposals.

Some time may elapse before the conferees agree on the differing provisions of now pending bills, before their agreements are ratified by their respective Houses, and before the bills are signed by the President. However, there follow some notes on certain of the pending measures which may be of interest to the OPEDA membership.

● CLASSIFICATION REVISION:

The general expectation is that the conferees of the two Houses of Congress will establish the detailed provisions of the revised classification bill. They will, of course, work within the general limits of the differing bills passed by their respective Houses but they will have considerable latitude, and in passing on their conference reports the two Houses need not be bound too rigidly by their earlier action. Thus the bill, as it finally is evolved, may differ so widely from the bills S. 2379 and H. R. 5931 that detailed discussions of those measures hardly would be warranted.

Both bills would convert three of the existing classification schedules, P&S, CAF, and SP, into a single General Schedule. The House bill would create 18 GS grades, with initial pay steps ranging from \$2,186 to \$15,000; the Senate bill would create 12 GS grades, the initial pay steps ranging from \$2,100 to \$12,500. In the conversion of existing P&S, CAF, and SP positions into the new GS grades both bills are alike up to grade GS-5 (P-1, SP-6, and CAF-5), but above that limit there is some variation in the allocation of old grades to new ones. That, no doubt, will be adjusted by the conferees.

Both bills provide for not to exceed three one-step advances in pay beyond the maximum of a grade, known as longevity increases, but the House bill limits such increases to those in grades GS-10 and lower while the Senate bill does not.

Through a quirk in a last-minute amendment the Senate bill might mean an average increase of \$170, whereas the average increase carried by the House bill would be \$113. However, these averages are made up of individual increases ranging from as low as \$6.48 to as high as \$670. Determination by the individual OPEDA member as to his or her position in the new salary schedule will have to await final enactment of the bill. Nobody will suffer a reduction in current salary because of the new classification law. Practically everybody will receive at least a token pay raise; some will get quite substantial salary boosts.

● RETIREMENT LEGISLATION:

The bill S. 1275, to allow retirement credit for years devoted to Federal-State cooperative work under State

appointment, has been in a state of suspended animation since the hearings thereon before the subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Post Office and Civil Service on June 20.

As reported in the May newsletter, the Civil Service Commission, the Bureau of the Budget, and the General Accounting Office have all made adverse reports on the bill. Thus there has been created in the Congress a feeling of apprehension as to the consequences to the civil-service retirement program were the bill enacted. The proposal is not foreclosed—rather, its merits have some recognition—but the prevalent viewpoint seems to be that the subject should be very completely analyzed and explored before approval is expressed even by a committee of Congress, let alone by either House. Apparently the common practice of a hearing by two or three members of a subcommittee, and a quick review of the record thus established by the other members of the committee or their administrative assistants, is not regarded as safe and sufficient in this case. The full membership of the committee does not feel that it can divert from other major matters the time required to arrive at a defensible judgment on S. 1275. On the House side, no companion bill to S. 1275 has been introduced. Thus the matter stands as of September 30.

Possibly the members of the Senate committee might feel that the bill was more worthy of their personal study if there were greater current evidence of widespread interest and support. Early in the year many communications strongly supportive of the bill were addressed to the committee and to individual members of the Senate, but recent recollections of interest and support apparently are not numerous or positive.

Notwithstanding the foregoing statement, a number of bills amendatory of the retirement act have been passed by Congress in recent months. Letters received by OPEDA manifest a keen interest in the details of retirement legislation, so brief summaries of those bills may be of general interest. The 81st Congress thus far has enacted and the President has approved the following laws in the field of civil-service retirement, namely:

Public Law 98. Persons separated from the service after January 23, 1942, may elect to forfeit retirement annuities and obtain return of their contributions with interest.

Public Law 123. Authorizes credit under section 9 of the Retirement Act for service for which, through inadvertence, no deductions from salary were made.

Public Law 180. Places Alaska Railroad and Canal Zone employees under the Civil Service Retirement Act, instead of the special acts which hitherto have governed their retirement.

Public Law 199. Authorizes exemption from the Retirement Act of certain employees of the Library of Congress and of the judicial branch of the Government whose employment is temporary or of uncertain duration.

Public Law 235. Allows employees engaged in the enforcement of the criminal laws of the United States to compute their retirement annuities on

the basis of their average basic salaries for any 5 consecutive years of allowable service instead of the 5 years immediately preceding retirement.

Public Law 267. Extends the benefits of section 1(c) of the Civil Service Retirement Act to employees who were involuntarily separated during the period from July 1, 1945, to July 1, 1947, after having rendered 25 years of service but prior to their attainment of the age of 55 years.

Public Law 310. Grants a woman employee the right to designate her husband under a joint survivorship agreement to the same extent as a male employee can designate his wife. Under its terms joint survivorship designation will result in a 5-percent reduction in the first \$1,500 of basic annuity and a 10-percent reduction on that part of the basic annuity in excess of \$1,500. This bill displaced S. 1440, which was passed by the Senate with provisions for a 5-percent reduction on the entire basic annuity, but which was not acceptable to the House.

Public Law 320. Places a maximum limit on computation of annuities of employees paid on a fee basis, and thus prevents \$10,000 annuities.

In addition to the above, H.R. 4295, which would provide for payment of an annuity (one-half of a decedent's annuity but not over \$600 per year) to survivors of annuitants who did not elect a survivor's annuity, was reported to the House on June 6 and placed on the Union Calendar and the Consent Calendar. It was also referred to the Rules Committee, which has not yet approved it. On August 15 an attempt was made to bring it up under unanimous consent, but objection was offered by Representative Cunningham, who contended that it would cost about \$11,000,000 and was too important for consideration on the Consent Calendar.

● **YOUTH WILL BE SERVED** if the Congress enacts H. R. 5985 introduced by Representative Miller of California on August 15. It provides that in case of a reduction in force in any department or independent agency in the executive branch of the government all employees of any such department or agency, in a particular class of positions, or in a particular trade or occupation, to whom the Civil Service Retirement Act of May 29, 1930, as amended, applies, and who have attained the age of 60 years and rendered at least 30 years of service computed as prescribed in section 5 of such act, shall be separated from the service and paid an annuity under such act before any other employee in

such department or agency in the same class of positions, or the same trade or occupation, is separated from the service, suspended without pay, or reduced in compensation. The bill does require that such "other employee" shall have permanent civil service status or equal competence. Whether all permanent employees born in 1890 or earlier would welcome the establishment of that principle remains to be determined.

● **PER DIEM DURING SICK LEAVE:** As approved June 9, 1949, H. R. 3005, now Public Law No. 92, seemed to provide practicable limits for per diem and auto mileage. Its weakness was that it made no provision for the employee who, in the course of travel on official business, was incapacitated for official duty by illness or injury and was not eligible for per diem payments while on annual or sick leave, even though remote from his place of residence and subject to even higher than normal costs of subsistence. To correct that condition, Chairman Dawson of the House Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments has introduced H. R. 5951, and Senator McClellan, chairman of the similar committee on the Senate side, has introduced S. 2422, which would permit payments of per diem to persons on a travel status who became temporarily incapacitated for official service. The bills are similar in essence but differ slightly in detail. The fact that they are sponsored by the chairmen of the respective committees greatly increases the probability of their approval by the committees and their enactment by the respective Houses.

● **EFFICIENCY RATINGS:** In their testimony with respect to the then pending bills to amend the Classification Act of 1923 (S. 1762 and H. R. 4169), representatives of both the Bureau of the Budget and the Civil Service Commission strongly recommended that title IX be omitted from the bills and later be considered as a separate piece of legislation. These recommendations are justified on the ground that the bills would apply only to the classified service whereas whatever efficiency rating procedure finally is adopted should be more generally applicable to all Federal personnel. The subject was asserted to be one of such importance and complexity as to require and merit complete and constructive consideration, which could be better afforded in a separate bill than as a part of a classification measure. The final draft of the Senate bill, S. 2379, partially recognized that principle but the final

draft of the House bill, H. R. 5931, did not.

● **BONDS:** When surety bonds are necessitated by a Federal employee's duties or functions, the premiums thereon in most cases must be paid by the employee from his own funds. That condition has created a great deal of dissatisfaction. To meet it, a number of bills are now pending in the 81st Congress. One approach is the establishment of a Federal Bonding Board, covered in the Senate by bill S. 1692 by Senator Holland and in the House by bill H. R. 4642 by Mr. Peterson. Similar in essence but different in detail is S. 1997 by Senator McCarran. The Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments has decided that these bills should be deferred until the next session.

An alternative approach is legislation to authorize Federal payment of premiums on such surety bonds, notably S. 193, Senator Downey, and H. R. 2830, Representative Hollifield; H. R. 2871, Representative Miller of California; H. R. 2943, Representative Multer; and H. R. 4084, also by Representative Multer.

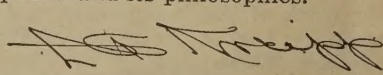
None of these bills stands any chance of enactment during the present session but, properly justified and supported, enactment during the second session of the 81st Congress could be wholly practicable. To OPEDA the current question is whether the subject is of sufficient interest to enough of its members to warrant aggressive action by the organization.

● **"LITTLE WAGNER ACT":** This is the colloquial title for the bill H. R. 3702 which was discussed as the last item in the May issue of the OPEDA newsletter at which time it was creating considerable perturbation in the minds of the more conservative classes of federal employees and in the departments and agencies. For a considerable subsequent period the proposal was completely quiescent. In September, however, the local columnists gave it renewed attention, stating that its supporters were reviving their demands for the early enactment of the bill. Some of the columnists were inclined to the view that the pressures behind the bill might bring about its enactment. The question therefore exists as to what OPEDA's position should be—whether it should support the measure, or hold aloof, or actively record its opposition to the proposal by written report, by oral testimony, and/or by personal conference with key members of the House. There has been no expression of views on the subject by the OPEDA membership, so that consensus of that membership cannot be stated with any confidence or conviction. This is another instance where more general expression by OPEDA members of their views on current proposals would be distinctly helpful to the officers of the organization in their efforts to express its viewpoints and its philosophies.

OPEDA
P. O. Box 381
Washington 4, D. C.

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